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RUALSFJ/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J2 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 000194

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KS](#) [KN](#)
SUBJECT: DEFECTORS SEEK NK REGIME CHANGE THROUGH CIVIL
ACTIVISM

REF: A. 06 SEOUL 4281
[1](#)B. 06 SEOUL 4282
[1](#)C. 06 SEOUL 4283
[1](#)D. 06 SEOUL 4284

Classified By: POL M/C Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) People for Successful Corean Reunification (PSCORE) is an organization newly founded by resettled North Koreans. While its short-term goal is to increase awareness of North Korea's human rights issues, the organization hopes ultimately to establish a network in the ROK, China and North Korea that will force regime change in the DPRK. The group, with neither money nor experience, has an uncertain future, but represents civil activism by North Korean defectors frustrated by the lack of interest in their issues by ROK civil society. END SUMMARY.

ORIGINS OF PSCORE

[1](#)2. (C) Kim Young-il is a 28-year-old North Korean defector who arrived in South Korea in 2001. Having graduated in 2006 from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, Kim was amazed that his South Korean classmates knew so little about North Korea and had such little interest in North Korean human rights. He told poloff on January 14 that because the groups that were focused on North Korean human rights issues were all run by South Koreans or foreigners, the leaders -- without firsthand experience of North Korea -- could not fully understand the issue. He also said that South Korean-led groups were too reluctant to discuss questions of unification and democratization of North Korea.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Accordingly, Kim and six fellow defectors created PSCORE in October 2006. It now has 120 members, Kim said, about half of whom are resettled North Koreans. About forty members gather for two meetings a month where they discuss human rights, study unification scenarios, and plan group activities. PSCORE relies on member donations for funding.

RAISING AWARENESS

[1](#)4. (C) The primary objectives of the organization are to raise awareness of North Korean human rights issues and support democracy and human rights in North Korea as a means

of facilitating peaceful unification. Through December 2007, Kim said PSCORE would focus on recruiting through campaigns, seminars, and regular meetings. The centerpiece of the campus program would be an experiential retreat where, for three days, participants would study North Korea while eating a typical North Korean diet. Kim believes that such an experience would motivate South Korean students to become more active in pursuing North Korean human rights. Meanwhile, PSCORE plans to lobby the National Assembly to establish a budget for North Korean democracy and to create a depository for evidence of North Korean human rights abuse.

INSTIGATING REGIME CHANGE

15. (C) PSCORE's longer term plans are more ambitious. According to Kim, PSCORE in 2008 would establish a network among North Koreans resident in China and the DPRK which would ultimately form the framework for a North Korean interim government. Meanwhile, the network would continue to educate North Korean residents through educational materials that affiliates would smuggle into North Korea through the Chinese border. In 2009, they would attempt to overthrow the DPRK regime and establish an "Administrative Interim Government of the Northern Peninsula," which would be in place for approximately ten years. Its basic purpose would be to help North Koreans adapt to capitalism and minimize the economic shock to South Korea during the transition period. North and South would unify when the North Korean economy stabilizes and majorities in North and South Korea agree.

NO POLITICAL VOICE IN THE ROK

18. (SBU) Kim said that PSCORE does not have any political affiliation. He said that the ruling Uri Party is more interested in appeasing the DPRK than talking about human rights. Indeed, Kim has not registered PSCORE as an NGO because he believes that the government would try to control its activities. While Kim believes that the Grand National Party or another conservative group would be more sympathetic to the concerns of defectors, he perceives that conservative parties are likely to exploit defectors for political gain rather than make sincere efforts on their behalf.

COMMENT

19. (C) Although the idea of attracting campus attention through a defector-run experiential program is likely to resonate with increasingly conservative university students, PSCORE, with neither money nor experience, may fail as an organization. Its formation, however, is significant as an early manifestation of resettled North Koreans seeking their own political voice, one which is far more radical than that of the mainstream South Korean public. Further, Kim Young-il may be someone to watch. He is not a celebrity defector -- like thousands of others, he left North Korea in the mid-1990s because of famine -- and his long-term vision for the Peninsula borders on fantasy. However, he is smart, ambitious and well-spoken. Regardless of PSCORE's fate, Kim could emerge as a representative for a defector constituency that is frustrated not just with the difficulties of integrating into South Korean society (reftels), but also with the general ROK silence on DPRK human rights and the long-term view most South Koreans have toward unification.

STANTON